

Response dated December 30, 2005
Office Action dated August 30, 2005

Application No. 09/809,542

REMARKS

The Office Action of August 30, 2005 has been reviewed and the comments therein were carefully considered. In the Office Action, there was an objection to Figure 1 and claims 1-4, 6-10, 12-15, 17-20, 22-32, and 36-71 stand rejected.

Objection to the Drawings

Figure 1 has been amended to indicate that the Figure 1 illustrates prior art. Applicants request reconsideration of the objection to the drawing.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Independent Claims 1, 17 and 67

Independent claims 1, 17, and 67 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,808,374 ("Miller") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,525,977 ("Suman"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Miller discloses a vehicle interface system 20 which allows a user to adjust the position of a seat, adjust the volume of the radio and adjust the position of the rear and side mirrors, for example. Miller discloses a key fob 35 which is provided with a memory and an actuation or set button for communicating with a control 26 through a receiver 36 (Col. 3, ln. 57 -- Col. 4, ln. 11). The key fob 35 stores a driver's individual selections for the various control parameters. The driver actuates the key fob 35 when approaching a car to move components to the desired position before the driver reaches the car.

If the individual preferences in the car have been set, the driver may actuate the memory button on the key fob 35 to move the key fob 35 into a learning mode. Information may then be

Response dated December 30, 2005
Office Action dated August 30, 2005

Application No. 09/869,542

communicated from the control 26 to the key fob 35 such that the key fob can capture the settings set by the individual operator.

The Office Action states that Miller discloses all of the features of the independent claims except for the system's "means for coupling with the output means of the portable controller to transfer the retrieved control information defining the user's preferences to the system." The Office Action alleges that a system having "means for coupling with the output means of the portable controller to transfer the retrieved control information defining the user's preferences to the system" is disclosed by Suman, curing the defect in Miller.

Suman discloses a vehicle personalization system 12 which comprises an overhead console 18 and a CD driver (CD player) 26. In Suman, a CD 28 may be inserted into the CD driver 26, which has a series of audio prompting signals stored on it that describe vehicle accessory options that may be selected by the operator. For example, track 1 includes an introduction, track 2 is used to program lock operation, and track 3 is used to program light and mirror operation.

When a user wishes to program the vehicle, he inserts the CD 28 into the CD driver 26. When a track is selected, a series of messages are conveyed through the speakers 39. Each message is followed by a pause. If the driver actuates the lock or unlock switch on a key fob 22 during a pause, a controller 30 in the overhead console 18 identifies the stop position in the CD and stores the operation selected by the user in the controller memory 41' in a respective table identified by the key fob used by the driver (the controller memory 41' is part of the controller 30 in the overhead console 18). An example of a message is, "if you would like your doors to automatically lock when you put your car in park, press 'lock' to activate or 'unlock' to deactivate during this pause".

Response dated December 30, 2005
Office Action dated August 30, 2005

Application No. 09/869,542

Suman, however, does not appear to be relevant to the invention as control information defining the user's preferences is not transferred from the key fob 22 to the system 12 in Suman. Instead, it appears that the vehicle personalization system 12 in Suman associates the radio frequency signal "T" of the key fob 22 with the preferences stored in the memory 41' in the system 12. There are no personal preferences stored in the key fob 22 that are transferred over to the system 12.

The Office Action appears to equate the "means for coupling" in independent claims 1, 17, and 67 to the keyless entry receiver 24 of the personalization system 12 of Suman.

Independent claims 1, 17, and 67 have been amended to recite that the portable controller comprises "a radio transceiver operable to transmit and receive on a low power radio frequency bi-directional link in order to transfer to the system the retrieved control information defining the user's preferences" and that the system comprises "a radio transceiver for coupling with the radio transceiver of the portable controller to transmit and receive on the low power radio frequency bi-directional link with the portable controller in order to transfer the retrieved control information defining the user's preferences to the system." Neither Miller nor Suman discloses such means for a low power radio frequency bi-directional link.

It is clear from reading Miller that the key fob 35 has two modes. In order to enter the first (learning) mode, the memory button on the key fob 35 is actuated. In the learning mode, information is communicated from the control 26 in the car to the key fob 35 (column 4, lines 1 to 6). In the second mode, a set button is pressed to send a signal to the control 26 that will begin to move components in the car to a desired position.

Miller does not disclose a bi-directional link being used between a portable controller and a system. When a link is set up in Miller, information only ever travels in one direction: from the key fob 35 to the control 26 or from the control 26 to the key fob 35. The key fob in Miller is clearly intended to be a simple device which is peripheral to the arrangement in Miller. The

Response dated December 30, 2005
Office Action dated August 30, 2005

Application No. 09/869,542

Miller disclosure is primarily directed towards the user interface of the in-car system and not the key fob 35. This is emphasized in column 4, lines 21 to 24, which states:

the use of this key fob is optional. The main feature of the interface aspect of the invention is [to] provide to the driver with prompts for the position and the level of vehicle control parameters. The operator is then provided the opportunity to adjust those parameters. A switch is generally required to adjust the parameters. Steering wheel 37 is shown mounting an inventive rotary switch 38 on its rim 37

The sophistication of a bi-directional link is therefore beyond the scope of the disclosure of the key fob 35 in Miller.

As indicated above, the key fob 22 in Suman merely transmits an RF signal "T" to the remote keyless entry 24. The vehicle personalization system 12 in Suman associates the "T" signal of the key fob 22 with the preferences stored in the memory 41' in the system 12. There are no personal preferences stored in the key fob 22 that are transferred over to the system 12.

Suman does not disclose the ability to transmit a signal to the key fob 22. Accordingly, there is no disclosure that the key fob 22 in Suman has any ability to receive information, and certainly no ability to process any received information. The provision of a bi-directional link as recited in independent claims 1, 17 and 67 is therefore beyond the scope of Suman.

The use of a bi-directional link in embodiments of the invention allows an authentication process to take place, in which the system is able to identify itself to the portable controller. This allows the portable controller to retrieve and transfer the control information defining user preferences that are relevant to that particular system. The portable controller in embodiments of the invention may therefore store user preferences that relate to a number of different systems, as it has the ability to retrieve only information for that is associated with the identifying system. Such a bi-directional link may also allow a signal to be transferred from the system to indicate that the device has been configured by the system (paragraph [0031] of the specification).

Response dated December 30, 2005
Office Action dated August 30, 2005

Application No. 09/869,542

Therefore, for at least the reasons discussed above, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 17 and 67 are patentable over Miller in view of Suman.

Independent Claims 70 and 71

Independent claims 70 and 71 have been amended to include the feature that "first control information defining the user's preferences for configuring a first device" is stored in memory circuitry in association with a first identifier, and "second control information defining the user's preferences for configuring a second device" is stored in the memory circuitry in association with a second identifier. The memory circuitry is arranged to retrieve control information that is associated with a particular identifier in response to a request associated with that identifier.

Neither Miller nor Suman discloses control information defining user preferences being associated with an identifier, or such control information being retrieved in response to a request associated with a particular identifier. Therefore, for at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 70 and 71 are patentable over Miller in view of Suman.

Dependent Claims 2-4, 6-10, 12-15, 18-20, 22-32, 36-66, 68-69, and 71-80

Furthermore, because claims 2-4, 6-10, 12-15, 18-20, 22-32, 36-66, 68-69, and 71-80 each depend from independent claims 1, 17, or 67, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2-4, 6-10, 12-15, 18-20, 22-32, 36-66, 68-69, and 71-80 are allowable for at least the same reasons as claims 1, 17 and 67.

In addition, the Office Action states that Suman discloses the feature "output means

Response dated December 30, 2005
Office Action dated August 30, 2005

Application No. 09/869,542

comprises means for performing a handshaking procedure with the system" of dependent claims 25 and 40-46. However, Suman does not disclose such a handshaking procedure because, as discussed above, the system 12 in Suman has no means of transmitting information to the key fob 22, and the key fob 22 has no means of receiving information. Therefore, for at least this additional reason, dependent claims 25 and 40-46 are allowable.

The Office Action rejects claim 26 on page 9, but provides no specific reasons for rejecting claim 26. Suman fails to disclose at least the "bi-directional link transfers the identity of a system/device to the controller and transfers control information from the controller to the system" feature of claim 26. In Suman, there can be no transfer of the identity of the system 12 to the key fob 22, as the system 12 has no means of transmitting information to the key fob 22, and the key fob 22 has no means of receiving information. Therefore, for at least this additional reason, claim 26 is allowable.

Amended Claims

Claims 1, 3-4, 17, 19-20, 25-26, 40-46, 67, 70, and 71 are being amended by this amendment in order to clarify the claimed invention. Support for these amendments to claims 1, 3-4, 17, 19-20, 25-26, 40-46, 67, 70, and 71 are found throughout the specification. Exemplary support is found in paragraphs 23 and 30-31.

New Claims

Dependent claims 73-80 are being added by this amendment. Support for claims 73-80 is found throughout the specification. Exemplary support is found in paragraphs 10, 22, and 34.

Response dated December 30, 2005
Office Action dated August 30, 2005

Application No. 09/849,542

Applicants respectfully submit that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe that a conversation with Applicants' representative would be useful in the prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited and encouraged to call Applicants' representative.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: December 30, 2005

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